

REMARKS

This Amendment and Reply is intended to be completely responsive to the Non-Final Office Action mailed August 5, 2008. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present Application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow. Claims 2-4, 6, 15 and 17 have been canceled without prejudice to further prosecution on the merits. Claims 1, 5, 7, 8, 11, 14, 16 and 18-20 have been amended. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, Claims 1, 5, 7-14, 16 and 18-20 will be pending in the present Application upon entry of this Amendment and Reply.

A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the Application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

On page 2 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 4-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶ 2, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the Examiner noted that there is insufficient antecedent basis for the term “the plane” as used in Claims 4-6.

Applicants thank the Examiner for noting this informality. Claims 4 and 6 have been canceled without prejudice to further prosecution on the merits. As detailed below, independent Claim 1 has been amended to recite “at least one of a plane and a cylindrical peripheral surface.” As such, Applicants submit that the rejection to Claims 4-8 is now moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 4-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶ 2.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

On pages 2-3 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-5 and 9-13 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,580,118 to Crotty (“Crotty”). This rejection should be withdrawn because Crotty fails to disclose, teach or suggest the claimed invention.

For example, independent Claim 1 (as amended) recites a “component” comprising, among other elements, a “snap-in connection provided between the cover element and the structural part for locking the cover element relative to the structural part, relative to a movement in the at least one of the plane and the cylindrical peripheral surface.”

Also, independent Claim 11 (as amended) recites a “method for producing a component” comprising, among other elements, “connecting a snap-in connection provided between the cover element to the structural part for locking the cover element relative to the structural part relative to a movement in the at least one of the plane and the cylindrical peripheral surface.”

Crotty does not disclose such a component or a method for producing such a component. In fact, the Examiner has already properly acknowledged that Crotty fails to disclose a component having a snap-in connection. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of independent Claims 1 and 11 because at least one element of such claims is not disclosed, taught or suggested by Crotty. Claims 5, 9 and 10, which depend from independent Claim 1, and Claims 12 and 13, which depend from independent Claim 11, are allowable therewith for at least the same reasons set forth above. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1-5 and 9-13 is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

1. Claims 6-8

On page 4 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 6-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Crotty in view of Japanese Patent No. 2002127819 to

Gokuritsu ("Gokuritsu"). This rejection should be withdrawn because Crotty, whether taken alone or in proper combination with and Gokuritsu, fails to disclose, teach or suggest the claimed invention.

As stated above, independent Claim 1 (as amended) recites a "component" comprising, among other elements, a "snap-in connection provided between the cover element and the structural part for locking the cover element relative to the structural part, relative to a movement in the at least one of the plane and the cylindrical peripheral surface."

Crotty, whether taken alone or in proper combination with and Gokuritsu, does not disclose, teach or suggest such components.

As set forth above, Crotty fails to disclose a component having a snap-in connection. In contrast, Crotty discloses a sun visor assembly having "pegs 100" disposed on an "inner core member 16" that are configured to received by "insertion openings 108" provided on an "outer cover assembly 18." Crotty teaches that during a process in which the "outer cover assembly" is folded over the "inner core member 16" and attached to itself, the "pegs 100" slide within "mating groove slots 110" (col. 5, lines 15-40). One of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would not have been motivated to add an additional connection (e.g., a snap-in connection, etc.) between the "inner core member 16" and the "outer core member 18" because Crotty expressly teaches that the fastening of the "outer cover assembly 18" onto itself locks the two members together and prevents them from becoming misaligned (col. 5, lines 40-45).

Nonetheless, in rejecting Claim 6, the Examiner stated that "Gokuritsu teaches (Fig 2) a vehicle component comprising at least one first sliding element (13) that cooperates with at least one second sliding element (8) and a snap-in connection (6, 11) for locking the component relative to a structural part relative to movement in the plane of the structural part," and concluded that "it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the device described by Crotty with a snap-in connection, as

taught by Gokuritsu, in order to lock the cover element in place so that vibration of the vehicle would cause it to work itself loose.” As set forth above, Applicants respectfully disagree that one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would have been motivated to modify the device described by Crotty with a snap-in connection. The suggestion to make the combination of Crotty and Gokuritsu has been taken from the Applicants’ own specification (using hindsight), which is improper.

The subject matter of Claim 6 has been added to independent Claim 1, and dependent Claims 7 and 8 have been amended to depend from independent Claim 1. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 6-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested.

2. Claims 14-20

On pages 5-6 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 14-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,365,416 to Peterson (“Peterson”) in view of Gokuritsu. This rejection should be withdrawn because Peterson, whether alone or in any proper combination with Gokuritsu, fails to disclose, teach or suggest the claimed invention.

For example, independent Claim 14 (as amended) recites a “sun visor for use in a vehicle” comprising, among other elements, a “structural part having a first set of sliding elements . . . [a] cover element having at least one main extension direction, substantially in at least one of a plane and a cylindrical peripheral surface, and a second set of sliding elements configured to interconnect with the first set of sliding elements . . . the first set of sliding elements and the second set of sliding elements being arranged to be coupled by a connecting movement of one of the cover element and the structural part, relative to the other, the connecting movement being carried out in the at least one of the plane and the cylindrical peripheral surface.”

Peterson, whether alone or in any proper combination with Gokuritsu, fails to disclose, teach or suggest such a sun visor for use in a vehicle. In contrast, Peterson discloses the type of sun visor discussed in the Background of the present Application (see, e.g., paragraph [0004]). Specifically, Peterson discloses a “frame 128” that is configured to be secured to a “core 18” by an insertion movement that is perpendicular to face of the “core 18” (col. 4, lines 48-53). During such movement, “hooks 136” provided on the “frame 128” engage “hooks 122 and 124” provided on the “core 18” in a snap-on arrangement to removably secure the “frame 128” to the “core 18” (see Fig. 3). Peterson teaches away from a connecting movement between the “frame 128” and the “core 18” in any direction other than a direction that is perpendicular to face of the “core 18” since the “hooks 136” on the “frame 128” must be inserted through “access openings 30” provided in a “cover 22” (col. 4, lines 51-53). As such, one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would not have been motivated to modify the sun visor described in Peterson to allow for a connecting movement in at least one of a plane and a cylindrical peripheral surface of a cover element, as required by independent Claim 14 (as amended). Applicants further submit that suggestion to make the combination of Peterson and Gokuritsu has been taken from the Applicants’ own specification (using hindsight), which is improper.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 14. Claims 16 and 18-20, which depend from independent Claim 14 are allowable therewith for at least the same reasons set forth above. Claims 15 and 17 have been canceled without prejudice to further prosecution on the merits. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 14-20 is respectfully requested.

* * *

Applicants respectfully submit that each and every pending rejection has been overcome, and that the present Application is in a condition for allowance. In particular, even when the elements of Applicants’ claims, as discussed above, are given a broad construction and interpreted to cover equivalents, the cited references do not teach, disclose, or suggest the claimed subject matter. Favorable reconsideration of the Application is respectfully requested.

Further, Applicants respectfully put the Patent Office and all others on notice that all arguments, representations, and/or amendments contained herein are only applicable to the present Application and should not be considered when evaluating any other patent or patent application including any patents or patent applications which claim priority to this patent application and/or any patents or patent applications to which priority is claimed by this patent application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, the Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 and authorize payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

Date 11/05/2008

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